

Jays wear down Minster, await playoff fate

Written by Jim Metcalfe

Friday, November 01, 2013 8:32 PM -



By JIM METCALFE

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DELPHOS — It's win-or-go-home time.

That would describe the Minster at St. John's Midwest Athletic Conference clash Friday night at Stadium Park.

Both the Blue Jays and the Wildcats needed to win and get help to extend their season into next week.

The Jays — honoring 11 seniors playing their final regular-season games — rallied with 21 points in the fourth period and held off Minster 35-28.

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St. John's (6-4, 6-2 MAC) were ninth in Region 24, while Minster (6-4, 6-2) stood ninth in Region 22.

"I don't want to say we are in for sure but it looks good that we made the playoff. We can watch the scoreboard and wait until it's official," St. John's head coach Todd Schulte asserted.

Minster led 21-14 to start the second half.

Minster gained a first down and the Jays two — including a 13-yard run by upback Tyler Jettinghoff (32 rushes, 141 yards, 4 scores) on a fake punt from the 44 — before punting the ball away on the first two drives of the second half.

However, on the Jays' boot from the Minster 38, Ben Wrasman pinned the Wildcats at the 4. The 'D' forced a 3-and-out and a 3-yard shanked punt gave the Jays a 1st-and-goal possession at the 10. Nick Martz ran for three, Luke MacLennan for three and, on the first play of the fourth period, Jettinghoff — out of the stack 'I' — powered inside left tackle for the six. Wrasman made it 21-21 with three ticks off the 4th-period clock.

The Jays' defense rose up again and forced a 3-and-out; Evan Hays' 14-yard return set the offense up at the 46. From there, it took 10 plays — including a 12-yard Martz-to-Tyler Conley connection on 4th-and-3 from the Wildcat 30 — to take the lead for good. At the 11, Jettinghoff, lined up as a wingback on the right side, took a reverse pitch from Martz around the left side; he stiff-armed a defender in the backfield and found the blocking to the end zone. Wrasman made it 28-21 with 3:57 remaining.

Hays came up with another big play — on defense; on the second play from scrimmage at the Minster 25, he picked off a tipped Josh Nixon (17-of-26 passing, 230 yards) pass and returned it 18 yards to the 12. Four straight runs by Jettinghoff finished it off, the last a 1-yard jolt off left guard where he pushed the pile. Wrasman made it 35-21 with 2:30 left.

Minster used a 33-yard Sam Dues kickoff return to start at the 40. Nixon was 3-of-5 on the drive for 62 yards in the 6-play sequence. At the Jays' 44, Nixon threw down the middle for the 6-4 Eli

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Wolf (7 grabs, 98 yards), who outjumped the defender for the catch; once he hauled it in at the 20, he headed toward the end zone, Jason Schultz made it 35-28 with 1:29 left.

Hays made his final big play of the night when he recovered the onside kick at the Jays' 48. One first down was all the hosts needed to run out the clock.

The Jays will wait until the OHSAA releases its final computer rankings of the season Sunday to learn their fate for week 11.

"I think we wore them down the second half. I have to give all the credit to the guys up front," Schulte said. "Everyone we play keys on number 14 (Jettinghoff); Minster did tonight and we just told him to be patient, that it would come to him. Nick is running the option better each week and Luke gives us a third weapon. Even though we are not a passing team, we made some big plays there, too. Outside of one penalty and one turnover the first half, we were very efficient offensively."

The Jays opened the contest with an 11-play drive that traveled from the 28 to the Minster 9 but on 4th-and-3, Jettinghoff was stopped a yard short of the first down.

Minster replied with a 4-play drive to get on the board, At the 25, Sam Dues (13 rushes, 129 yards) took a handoff up the middle and once he broke the traffic at the line of scrimmage, he raced all the way to the house. Schultz added the conversion for a 7-0 edge with 4:14 showing in the first period.

The Jays replied with an even faster 2-play, 58-yarder. After Jettinghoff ran for three to put the pigskin at the 45, MacLennan (13 rushes, 124 yards) took a handoff inside left guard, tore through the hole and didn't stop until the end zone. Wrasman's kick was no good, leaving the score 7-6, Minster, with 3:15 showing in the opener.

Minster's next drive started at the 20 and ended up — four plays later — on a 4th-and-4 at the Jays' 32 that saw a Nixon incomplection.

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The Jays marched from the 32 to the Wildcat 30 in six plays but a fumble on play seven was recovered by Hayden Schindler, setting up the visitors at the 34. Four plays later at the St. John's 29, Nixon faked a running play, turned and fired for A.J. Huelsman behind the defense for the six. Schultz made it 14-7 with 8:47 left in the half.

The Blue and Gold went on a clock-eating (7:17) 15-play drive to tie it up. Nick Martz (5-of-5 passing, 60 yards; 15 rushes, 53 yards) hit Any May for 14 and Jettinghoff for seven. The rest of the plays were on the ground, including the culminator from the Minster 5 — a burst off left guard by Jettinghoff. Martz ran in the 2-pointer for a 14-14 tie with 1:30 left in the half.

That left too much time for Minster — running the no-huddle offense the entire game — as they marched 69 yards in eight plays. Nixon, who was 4-of-6 passing on the drive (47 yards), finished it off with a 13-yard connection to Eli Wolf in the left corner of the end zone with 20 ticks left. Schultz made it 21-14 at the half.

“Our defensive staff, led by Coach (Steve) Recker, made some subtle adjustments at the half. They were moving the ball on us the first half and it was a matter of putting ourselves in better position,” Schulte added.

ST. JOHN'S 35, MINSTER 28

Score by Quarters:

Minster 7 14 0 7 - 28

St. John's 6 8 0 21 - 35

FIRST QUARTER

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MI — Sam Dues 44 run (Jason Schultz kick), 4:14

SJ - Luke MacLennan 55 run (kick failed), 3:15

SECOND QUARTER

MI — A.J. Huelsman 29 pass from Josh Nixon (Schultz kick), 8:47

SJ - Tyler Jettinghoff 5 run (Nick Martz run), 1:30

MI - Eli Wolf 13 pass from Nixon (Schultz kick), :20

THIRD QUARTER

No scoring

FOURTH QUARTER

SJ - Jettinghoff 4 run (Ben Wrasman kick), 11:57

SJ - Jettinghoff 11 run (Wrasman kick), 3:57

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SJ - Jettinghoff 1 run (Wrasman kick), 2:30

MI - Wolf 44 pass from Nixon (Schultz kick), 1:29

TEAM STATS

Minster St. John's

First Downs 15 20

Total Yards 375 378

Rushes-Yards 16-145 60-318

Passing Yards 230 60

Comps.-Atts. 17-26 5-5

Intercepted by 0 1

Fumbles-Lost 0-0 1-1

Penalties-Yards 3-15 2-25

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Punts-Aver. 3-24 1-34

INDIVIDUAL

MINSTER

RUSHING: Sam Dues 13-129, Josh Nixon 2-10, Jacob Stechschulte 1-6.

PASSING: Nixon 17-26-230-1-3.

RECEIVING: Eli Wolf 7-98, Ethan Wolf 4-20, Jacob Dues 2-67, A.J. Huelsman 2-67, S. Dues 1-9.

ST. JOHN'S

RUSHING: Tyler Jettinghoff 32-141, Luke MacLennan 13-124, Nick Martz 15-53.

PASSING: Martz 5-5-60-0-0.

RECEIVING: Tyler Conley 2-25, Ben Wrasman 1-14, Andy May 1-14, Jettinghoff 1-7.